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SUBJECT: CZECH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BALKANS

REF: A. PRAGUE 01543

[1](#)B. 05 PRAGUE 00058

[1](#)1. Summary. This is the second in a series of cables summarizing significant Czech contributions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans. The Czech Republic strongly supports U.S. policy in the Balkans, and views the region as the country's highest security priority. Thus, in recent years the Czechs have made substantial contributions in the areas of military and security, development assistance, and humanitarian aid. Currently, 450 Czech soldiers serve in the KFOR mission in Kosovo. An additional 55 troops serve as peacekeepers in Bosnia. Overall, the Czech Republic has spent (or is planning to spend) an estimated \$345 million to benefit the people of Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia since 1999. The Czech Republic has spent nearly \$200 million on military and security contributions since 1999. Other Czech contributions include: (1) \$36 million in development assistance since 2000 (and plans to spend nearly \$15 million in 2007-2008); (2) \$95 million to the Stability Pact fund for the Balkans; (3) \$500,000 on programs to promote democracy in the region; and (4) humanitarian assistance focused primarily on education and healthcare. (Ref A summarizes Czech contributions to Iraq. Septel will summarize Czech contributions to Afghanistan.) End summary.

Background

[1](#)2. Support for democracy and human rights is a core principle of Czech foreign policy, and an enduring legacy of the Czech Republic's forty-year struggle against communism. Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czech Republic has proven itself a reliable U.S. ally in these areas, as well as an important partner in NATO and GWOT, a like-minded ally in the United Nations, and a strong promoter within the EU of the transatlantic relationship.

[1](#)3. The Czech Republic has identified the Balkans as a priority for all types of assistance because of strong historic ties between the Czechs and the people of the Balkans region, and to promote regional security. The Czechs are also engaged politically in the region. The Czech government supports future membership in NATO and the EU for Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro, and supports independence for Kosovo. The information below focuses primarily on Czech assistance for Serbia/Montenegro and Bosnia.

Military/Security Contributions

[1](#)4. As detailed below, Czech military and security

contributions to the Balkans since 1999 total nearly \$200 million.

15. The Czech Army has participated in the NATO mission in Kosovo (KFOR) since 1999, beginning with the deployment of a reconnaissance unit. Since 2002, the Czech Army has operated within a joint Czech-Slovak Battalion (composed on average of 500 Czech and 100 Slovak soldiers). In 2005, the Czech Army assumed the lead of the KFOR Multinational Task Force Center for six months. Currently, 450 Czech troops serve in KFOR. The cost of the Czech contribution to the KFOR mission since 1999, including the 2007 budget, is \$183 million.

16. From 1999 to 2004, the Czech Republic deployed a total of 3,260 troops to the NATO mission in Bosnia (SFOR). In 2004, 120 Czech troops and two helicopters were deployed in Bosnia as peacekeepers with EU Althea (EUFOR). Currently, 55 Czech troops serve in Bosnia. The cost of Czech missions in Bosnia since 1999, including the 2007 budget, is \$13 million.

17. Additional security contributions to the region include:

-- In 2001, the Czech Army participated in the NATO mission in FYROM (Essential Harvest), with 120 troops at a cost of \$800,000.

-- Police missions: Five Czech police are currently serving in the EU Police Mission in Bosnia (EUPM). Fourteen Czech police currently are serving in the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

-- Since October 2006, two experts on security and a logistics have served in the International Civilian Mission in Kosovo (ICM/ICO Preparation Team).

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-- NATO Trust Fund: the Czechs donated EUR 20,000 (\$27,175) to the fund for requalification of released soldiers, and EUR 10,000 (\$13,590) for liquidation of ammunition.

Democracy Promotion

18. The Czech MFA has designated Bosnia, Serbia, and now Montenegro, as priority countries (among others) for the MFA's Transformation Cooperation Unit (TRANS). TRANS is responsible for promoting democracy and strengthening civil society in third countries (Ref B). Since 2005, when TRANS was founded, the Czech MFA has spent nearly \$500,000 in the Balkans. Implementing partners and projects in 2007 include:

-- AGORA Central Europe: strengthening citizen participation in local government.

-- The VIA Foundation: support for the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), an independent Serbian grant foundation that focuses on community development.

-- Public administrators from the Southern Moravia Region of the Czech Republic: capacity building program for the public administration of the Sumadia region.

Reconstruction & Development

19. The Czech MFA has also designated Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia as priority countries for international development assistance. Czech projects in the region focus on industrial development, transport, healthcare, social development, migration, good governance, and environmental preservation. From 2001 to 2006, the Czechs spent over \$26.2 million on projects in Serbia and Montenegro, and over \$10 million in Bosnia. In May 2007, the Czech government announced it has

allocated \$15.4 million for Serbia through 2010 for development assistance, and an additional \$2.7 for environmental protection.

¶10. In addition, since 1999 the Czech government has contributed a total of \$95 million to the Stability Pact (SP) to help stabilize the Balkans region (and in particular to fund solutions to the Kosovo crisis). Examples of Czech projects funded by SP funds include police training, assistance for internally displaced people, agricultural development, and industrial development. These projects were administered by the Czech Ministries of Interior, Agriculture, and Industry and Trade.

¶11. In addition, Czech SP funds were used to provide assistance in the area of defense and security. For example, the Czechs co-financed a NATO project to improve communication equipment for the Bosnian Army, to support an OSCE project for Albanian border police, for a seminar for Serbian and Montenegrin students and journalists on the benefits of NATO membership. The Czechs have also made annual contributions to the International Trust Fund for demining activities in the region.

¶12. An estimated \$1 million remains in the SP fund, and will be provided to international organizations working in the Balkans. Examples of prior fund recipients include UNESCO (working to preserve cultural sites), and organizations that disarm citizens and provide capacity training for government leaders and police.

Humanitarian Assistance

¶13. The Czech government also provides humanitarian relief in the region. For example:

-- Czech soldiers deployed in the KFOR mission have participated in humanitarian aid projects, including the delivery of educational equipment donated by Czech schools.

-- The Czech government provides government scholarships to Czech universities to students from the Balkans. In 2006 alone, the Czechs provided scholarships for 48 students from Serbia, and 7 students from Bosnia.

-- The Ministry of Interior funds a medevac program that provides medical care in the Czech Republic for small numbers of chronically ill children living in Kosovo.

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-- Since the 1990s, Czech NGO People in Need has worked to improve health care services and the quality of life for Serbians living with mental disabilities.

-- The Czech government has approved a plan to send four Czech prison guards to the Hague to work in the UN prison serving the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The annual cost of this assistance is over \$180,000.

-- During the refugee crisis in 1999, the Czech government allocated money for a refugee camp in Albania and provided temporary refuge for Kosovo refugees.

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